

1.-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for continuously producing baked long doctor

blade materials comprising:

a material reel for holding a long doctor blade material spirally;

a plurality of pinch rolls for cramping and forwardly supplying the long doctor blade material continuously while a blade surface of the long doctor blade material is maintained in a horizontal direction with respect to a surface of a solution, for plating the long doctor blade material wherein a higher concentration of ceramic fine powder is deposited on a top surface of the long doctor blade material than a concentration of the ceramic fine powder on a lower surface of the long doctor blade material;

a take-up reel for continuously taking up the long doctor blade material;

~~a plurality of pinch rollers for continuously forwardly straightening out long doctor materials plated from a take-up reel;~~

treatment means for plating the long doctor blade material between the material reel and the take-up reel including:

means for degreasing the long doctor blade material ~~materials~~;

means for rinsing the long doctor blade material ~~materials~~;

means for immersing the long doctor blade material ~~materials~~ in an acid immersion solution;

second rinsing means for rinsing the long doctor blade material ~~materials~~;

means for electroless ceramic composite nickel plating of the long doctor blade material ~~materials~~;

means for collecting plating solution after the long doctor blade material ~~materials~~ has been plated;

third rinsing means for rinsing the plated long doctor blade material ~~materials~~; and

means for drying the rinsed plated long doctor blade material ~~materials~~, wherein said ~~drying is done between a first step of supplying continuously a long doctor blade base material held on a material reel spirally while the blade surface is maintained in a horizontal direction with respect to the surface of the solution for uniformly plating the long doctor blade material wherein a higher concentration of a ceramic fine powder is deposited on a top surface of the long doctor blade material than a concentration of the ceramic fine powder deposited on the lower surface of the long doctor blade material, and a final step of taking up continuously the blade base material on the corresponding take up reel while the blade base material is cramped by a plurality of pinch rolls; and~~

a plurality of pinch rolls for continuously forwardly straightening out the long doctor blade material plated from the take-up reel; and

a straightening furnace for baking through which the straightened plated long doctor blade material ~~passes blades pass~~.

10. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein

the means for degreasing the long doctor blade material ~~materials~~ includes a degreasing treatment tank;

the means for rinsing the long doctor blade material ~~materials~~ includes a rinsing treatment tank;

the means for immersing the long doctor blade material ~~materials~~ in an acid immersion solution includes an acid immersion treatment tank;

the second rinsing means for rinsing the long doctor blade material ~~materials~~ includes a second rinsing treatment tank;

the means for electroless ceramic composite nickel plating of the long doctor blade material ~~materials~~ includes an electroless ceramic composite nickel plating treatment tank;

the means for collecting plating solution after the long doctor blade material ~~materials~~ has been plated includes a plating solution collection treatment tank;

the third rinsing means for rinsing the plated long doctor blade material ~~materials~~ includes a third rinsing treatment tank; and

the means for drying the rinsed plated long doctor blade material ~~materials~~ includes a drying treatment tank, between the material reel and the take-up reel.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising a space tank disposed between each of the degreasing and rinsing treatment tanks, the rinsing and acid immersion treatment tanks, the acid immersion and the second rinsing treatment tanks, the second rinsing treatment tank and the electroless ceramic composite nickel plating treatment tank, the electroless ceramic composite nickel plating treatment tank and the plating solution collection treatment tank, the plating solution collection treatment tank and the third rinsing treatment tank, and the third rinsing treatment tank and the drying treatment tank.

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising a partition plate between each of said space tanks and each respective adjoining treatment tank,

each partition plate having a slit portion through which the long doctor blade ~~material materials~~ can pass.

13. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for continuously producing baked long doctor blade materials comprising:

a plurality of material reels for holding a plurality of long doctor blade materials spirally;

a plurality of pinch rolls for cramping and forwardly supplying the plurality of long doctor blade materials continuously while blade surfaces of the plurality of long doctor blade materials are maintained in a horizontal direction with respect to a surface of a solution, for plating the plurality of long doctor blade materials wherein a higher concentration of ceramic fine powder is deposited on a top surface of the plurality of long doctor blade materials than a concentration of the ceramic fine powder on a lower surface of the plurality of long doctor blade materials;

a plurality of take-up reels for continuously taking up the plurality of long doctor blade materials;

~~a plurality of pinch rollers for continuously forwardly straightening out long doctor materials plated from a take-up reel;~~

treatment means for plating the long doctor blade materials between the material reels and the take-up reels including:

means for degreasing the long doctor blade materials;

means for rinsing the long doctor blade materials;

means for immersing the long doctor blade materials in an acid immersion solution;

second rinsing means for rinsing the long doctor blade materials;

means for electroless ceramic composite nickel plating of the long doctor blade materials;

means for collecting plating solution after the long doctor blade materials has been plated;

third rinsing means for rinsing the plated long doctor blade materials; and

means for drying the rinsed plated long doctor blade materials, ~~wherein said drying is done between a first step of supplying continuously a plurality of long doctor blade base materials held on a plurality of material reels spirally while the blade surfaces are maintained in a horizontal direction with respect to the surface of the solution and a predetermined interval therebetween is maintained for uniformly plating the plurality of long doctor blade materials wherein a higher concentration of a ceramic fine powder is deposited on a top surface of each of the plurality of long doctor blade materials than a concentration of the ceramic fine powder deposited on the lower surface of each of the plurality of long doctor blade materials, and a final step of taking up continuously the plurality of doctor blade base materials on a plurality of corresponding take-up reels while the plurality of blade base materials are cramped by a plurality of pinch rolls; and~~

a plurality of pinch rolls for continuously forwardly straightening out the long doctor blade materials plated from the take-up reels; and

a straightening furnace for baking through which the straightened plated long doctor blade materials ~~blades~~ pass.

14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 13, wherein

the means for degreasing the long doctor **blade** materials includes a degreasing treatment tank;

the means for rinsing the long doctor **blade** materials includes a rinsing treatment tank;

the means for immersing the long doctor **blade** materials in an acid immersion solution includes an acid immersion treatment tank;

the second rinsing means for rinsing the long doctor **blade** materials includes a second rinsing treatment tank;

the means for electroless ceramic composite nickel plating of the long doctor **blade** materials includes an electroless ceramic composite nickel plating treatment tank;

the means for collecting plating solution after the long doctor **blade** materials has been plated includes a plating solution collection treatment tank;

the third rinsing means for rinsing the plated long doctor **blade** materials includes a third rinsing treatment tank; and

the means for drying the rinsed plated long doctor **blade** materials includes a drying treatment tank, between the material reels and the take-up reels.

15. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising a space tank disposed between each of the degreasing and rinsing treatment tanks, the rinsing and acid immersion treatment tanks, the acid immersion and the second rinsing treatment tanks, the second rinsing treatment tank and the electroless ceramic composite nickel plating treatment tank, the electroless ceramic composite nickel plating treatment tank and the plating solution collection treatment tank, the plating solution collection treatment tank and the third rinsing treatment tank, and the third rinsing treatment tank and the drying treatment tank.

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising a partition plate between each of said space tanks and each respective adjoining treatment tank, each partition plate having a plurality of parallel slit portions through which the plurality of long doctor blade materials can pass.